

Transcript; Carl Durnell 5/24/00

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

In the Matter of:

M.S. NIEUW AMSTERDAM PAX 1
TARR INLET, ALASKA 5/23/00

Recorded Interview of CARL DURNELL.

May 24, 2000

~~Tarr Inlet~~
Juneau
Tarr Inlet, Alaska
~~Barrett House~~
Bartlett

BEFORE:

NBE
GARY ~~OBBEY~~
Investigator

ORIGINAL

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2 THE INVESTIGATOR: This is Gary ^{Abe} ~~Obbey~~, and I
3 am interviewing Carl Durnell at the ^{Bartlett} ~~Barrett~~ House in
4 Juneau, Alaska. And it's about 4 o'clock local time.

5 I have talked with Carl about the NTSB and
6 its mission and what I'm here for, and the information
7 that we need and why we need it from them.

8 Also, I discussed with Carl about any time
9 that he wants, I could stop this tape and pause it --
10 if he wants some clarification or he decides not to
11 talk about something.

12 He also understands I'll be taking some
13 handwritten notes, and also that a tape recorder is
14 going to go, and he has acknowledged that and given me
15 that permission.

16 I have taken down the information about his
17 address and telephone number, and I got his cabin
18 number. His cabin number is 606. And he was on Deck-
19 B.

E X A M I N A T I O N

20
21 BY THE INVESTIGATOR.

22 Q The first question that I'll ask Carl is:
23 Carl, please describe how, what and when any
24 emergency instructions were given to you once you
25 boarded. And did it consist of any drills, for

1 instance?

2 And how were the instructions given to you?

3 And did they include what to do in case you smelled
4 smoke or saw a fire, whether to use fire screen doors
5 in an emergency?

6 And also whether or not the instructions gave
7 locations of where you could find life preservers, and
8 also a mustering station.

9 So, Carl, if you will -- and please feel free
10 to give your observations and feel free just to tell me
11 what happened in this emergency briefing phase.

12 A We arrived on the ship and they assigned a
13 young man to direct us to where our cabin was located.
14 And that started it off wrong, too, because he did not
15 know where our cabin was either.

16 Anyways, we finally found our cabin. They
17 announced over the PA system that there was some laws,
18 regulations that had to be gone over with people, the
19 tourists on the ship, of where and what the regulations
20 would be concerning a fire drill, where we would have
21 to go, where our life jackets were and where they were
22 located at.

23 And that on the life jackets, one side had
24 our cabin number and the other side had our
25 disembarkation number on the other side of the life

1 jacket.

2 So they were well-marked, the life jackets
3 were. And they told us that they were at the top of
4 the closet in our cabin. And that was well-marked.

5 Other than that, we had an emergency fire
6 drill and everybody got their life jackets and went to
7 their disembarkation station. And we were talked with
8 for a few minutes up there and showed how to put life
9 jackets on.

10 But there was a number of people that went by
11 that were not suited up right with their life jackets.
12 They were not put on right.

13 And I did notice that the majority of the
14 passengers were fine in our area.

15 Q Carl, when did that drill occur? Was it an
16 hour or two hours after the ship was underway?

17 A Gary, to the best of my recollection, it was
18 within the two-hour period after we met ^{on} ~~to~~ the ship, as
19 I remember. But, they did go through that part of it.

20 But that was about the extent of it. There
21 was no dealing with the fire crews or that there was a
22 special crew for in case of fire.

23 He did tell us about the fire doors, that
24 once it reached a certain temperature or smoke thing,
25 that the fire doors would close and there would be

1 absolutely no entrance or exit through these doors
2 because they would self-seal.

3 Q Did they give you a muster station?

4 A Yes. The muster station, like I spoke with
5 you, was the disembarkation area up on the upper deck
6 where the life boats were at.

7 And we happened to be station 6. And there
8 was a bunch of other people, naturally, from there, our
9 immediate area, too.

10 But, anyway, yes. They gave us a station to
11 go to.

12 Q Did they describe to you how you would be I
13 guess notified that there was an emergency?

14 A Yes. They said there would be and they did
15 do it on the PA system of seven short dings and one
16 long ding. And then there would be followed by a
17 message.

18 And that's the way they did it. Or, that's
19 the way they explained it to us in the prestaging time.

20 Q Did that actually happen?

21 A We were at breakfast when this happened. And
22 the ring of this bell did not seem like we counted.
23 And we come up, all three of us -- my brother-in-law,
24 my wife and I -- came up with different numbers of
25 dings.

1 And then they proceeded with a message on the
2 PA system that there was a fire on D-deck in the cruise
3 quarters, but it was not an emergency situation and it
4 was well under control, that sort of thing.

5 And we were still eating breakfast. And then
6 there was a few more dings. I don't know how many
7 there was but then they come on the PA system again and
8 said that the fire was spreading a little bit and the
9 smoke was starting to get in through the ship.

10 And they thought it would be a good idea that
11 everybody met, go down to D-deck, stay away from D-
12 deck.

13 Q Now that we've sort of gotten into the actual
14 fire, let's just go back -- or let's just go forward, I
15 think. First of all, is there anything more you want
16 to talk about as to the emergency instructions and
17 drills?

18 A Well, they told us that there was going to be
19 people at different station points throughout the ship
20 to help direct us, probably like in a panic stage, that
21 everybody would be disorientated.

22 And, to my knowledge, of what I went through,
23 there wasn't anybody. And the ship was like it was
24 empty.

25 And like you mentioned just a few minutes

1 ago, as we get further into this fire thing, that I had
2 run into that situation where I had run across a few
3 crew members. And they were all in one area.

4 And the traffic control, which they said they
5 would have people, that would be the people at
6 designated areas, the only place I found traffic
7 control was up on F-deck, up by the swimming pool.

8 Q Okay.

9 A But, the majority of the people that were in
10 E had brought their jackets, cameras, binoculars
11 because we were in Glacier Bay. And the Forest Service
12 were aboard. And the majority of the people that
13 already had all their stuff with them to go right out
14 from the breakfast dining room to the outside deck to
15 watch this and hear the Foresters explain about the
16 glaciers and stuff.

17 So the majority of the people were already
18 out. if it would have been a day where we were going
19 to make port, the majority of the people would have
20 been walking through the ship and most likely have been
21 in their cabins.

22 So we were lucky in that aspect, I think.

23 Q Okay, let's go ahead. Can you describe what
24 you did and your observations as to prior to and during
25 and shortly after the fire? And how you were injured,

1 actually injured?

2 And, in particular, just starting, I guess
3 you were in your room? Is that -- let's just go back
4 and make sure we clarify something.

5 You mentioned earlier that you heard the
6 seven dings at breakfast.

7 A Yeah, we were at the breakfast table and we
8 were about halfway through.

9 Q Let's take it from there.

10 A From that point, we had listened to the PA
11 system and what they told us about D-deck. And we had
12 finished eating. And the four of us had talked that it
13 might be a good idea, since they were banning everybody
14 from D-deck, that we would go down and get our ^{Certs} ~~boats~~,
15 binoculars and cameras and life jackets then. And then
16 we would already have them. And come back up and start
17 viewing the glaciers and listening to the Foresters
18 explain the situation.

19 So we decided to do that. In our exit to our
20 cabin to go down there to get the stuff, we had run
21 across different crew members at different points.

22 And we verbally asked them if it was okay to
23 proceed on where we were going to, which was B-deck,
24 and the other end to the bow~~er~~ of the ship where our
25 cabin was located, and my brother-in-law's and my

1 sister's.

2 And they said, "It's perfectly all right.
3 There's nothing down here."

4 So but we did go past D-deck and there was
5 some slight smoke there. But, in the next deck and the
6 next deck and it was clear.

7 And the wife and I proceeded on down the
8 hallway toward our cabin. And it was just like it's in
9 this room right now. It was clear as a bell.

10 Q Let me ask you this just for the time
11 sequence. From the time you left the breakfast room
12 until the time that you got to the cabin, how long was
13 that?

14 A Between five and ten minutes. Six, seven
15 minutes, something in that time span. And we got to
16 the cabin, went inside and we knew, we talked about
17 what we were going to get on the way down and who was
18 going to do it.

19 And I got the medicine, threw it on the bed.
20 And Sue raked everything that was a necessity for us to
21 take with us right away.

22 And I proceeded to get the life jackets and
23 the coats, and the camera and the binoculars. And we
24 said, "Let's go." We couldn't have been in that cabin
25 more than four or five minutes at the most.

1 When I opened the cabin door, that's when we
2 got hit. It was solid smoke from the floor to the
3 ceiling all the way down, well, all the way down the
4 hallway there. You could actually see that. And you
5 couldn't see because it was just filled with solid
6 smoke.

7 Q When you say "solid", it was that dense?

8 A It was so dense, Gary, that you couldn't see
9 your hand in front of your face when you was out there.
10 That's how bad it was. It was really, really bad.

11 And I yelled at Sue and I said, "Go. Just go
12 -- down the hallway."

13 (Record paused.)

14 THE INVESTIGATOR: I paused the tape for Carl
15 to get a drink of water. And we are restarting the
16 interview.

17 Go ahead.

18 MR. DURNELL: Anyways, I told her to take off
19 down the hall and I followed her. Couldn't see her.
20 She eventually got out and I got down on the floor
21 (voice breaking).

22 THE INVESTIGATOR: I'm going to pause for a
23 minute.

24 (Record paused.)

25 THE INVESTIGATOR: We're going to continue

1 our interview.

2 MR. DURNELL: Yeah, I told Sue to just keep
3 trucking on down the aisle and just keep going. And I
4 followed her and I got disorientated. And looking for
5 an opening. Couldn't find one.

6 The fire door had closed at the opening.
7 That was just past our cabin. And went down on the
8 floor to see if --

9 BY THE INVESTIGATOR:

10 Q Carl, did you go left or right?

11 A Coming out of our cabin, we went to the left.

12 Q Okay.

13 A If you turned to the right, you went to the
14 bow and there was no exit there. It was like closed
15 off. There was no access to the upper decks if you
16 went to the bow from our cabin. So we went left to go
17 aft.

18 Q Okay.

19 A And there was an opening there with
20 staircases in the center of the ship that would allow
21 you to get to an upper deck, but they had a fire door
22 and it closed.

23 That means we had to stay in the hallway all
24 the way to the aft of the ship and then engage with a
25 staircase to an upper deck or a lower deck. You had

1 access to an elevator but you can't go on the elevators
2 when they have that. They automatically close off.

3 Anyway, she got out; that I found out later.
4 And I don't know. I think I temporarily blacked out
5 and fell into a wall. And come back and turn right
6 around and smack into the wall a second time.

7 Then I went down on the floor and I crawled
8 and then I walked, then I crawled. And I run into a
9 person and grabbed his leg. He pulled me up, and up
10 the stairs, up the stairs and out into a crew dining
11 room where the crew was at, or part of the crew
12 anyways.

13 And went in there and got a little better
14 breathing because it was out of the smoke, and got
15 orientated a little bit. And they were talking in a
16 foreign language, which was Indonesian because that's
17 what 99.9 probably the crew is.

18 Then, a couple of young crew members come in
19 through the door, bursting in, and they started yelling
20 things in a foreign language.

21 And I didn't understand what they said but,
22 all of a sudden, everybody just jumped up out of their
23 chairs and whatever they were doing, they stopped. And
24 everybody headed for the one door that was exiting out
25 the back of the ship on to an exterior deck.

1 And I grabbed one of their shirttails or
2 sleeves or whatever it was, and I followed them and we
3 went outside into the fresh air.

4 Q So, in this crew room, there was no smoke?

5 A No. It was one level up above where our
6 cabin was on B-deck area. And it was absolutely clear
7 of smoke at that time.

8 I don't know what it was like later on but
9 when I was coming down the hallway and between the
10 falling down, or getting down on the floor to see if
11 there was more air down there, or clearer, or standing
12 up and trying to make time.

13 And my life jacket's getting hung up on the
14 door handles when you're checking for an opening of any
15 kind, because the visibility was zero. And I thought I
16 was going to die.

17 I was really glad to see that, that day.

18 Q You mentioned that you grabbed hold of
19 someone's shirt sleeve or something?

20 A Yes, that was a crew member in the dining
21 hall because they, like they all panicked. When these
22 two guys came in and told them something in their
23 native tongue, it must have been like, "Hey, the fire
24 is spreading. Get the heck out of here."

25 So they all split for that back door. And I

1 said, "Well, why am I going to stay here? So I'm going
2 with them."

3 And I didn't know where I was at the time.
4 Not knowing the ship that well.

5 Q Right.

6 A But, I figured if they were all going in one
7 direction and it led to the aft of the ship, that that
8 was safety for me. So I figured if I could get out
9 there with them, then I could look for my wife, my
10 sister and my brother-in-law.

11 Q If you had not done that, I mean, did anyone
12 try to help you?

13 A No. Absolutely none.

14 Q So everyone was sort of --

15 A On their own. They were looking out for
16 number one -- themselves.

17 Q Okay.

18 A I had seen four or five crew members at the
19 top of them stairs before I entered the dining room
20 with air packs on. And that's exactly what they were
21 doing, just standing there basically and talking muffled
22 through their face mask.

23 But, they weren't doing anything at that
24 time. But I didn't care because I didn't hang around
25 with them. I just split into the -- after I opened the

1 door and found out where I was, I was in the dining
2 area for the crew.

3 Q How immobilized were you at that time when
4 you ran in the crew cabin and going toward the aft?

5 A I was breathing heavily and I was
6 disorientated because I didn't know where in the hell I
7 was at.

8 And if these two guys hadn't of picked me up
9 and pushed me to that staircase, I still wouldn't know
10 where I was at. The smoke was so damned through the
11 ship anyway.

12 I mean, in a routine, we knew where to go,
13 where the elevator was. ^{we} ~~We~~ wanted for the dining area,
14 the casino and Styverson Mounds, that kind of thing, we
15 knew that because we always took the same path.

16 But, for any short-cuts to know where access
17 would be to the outside immediately, we didn't know.
18 But, the crew sure knew.

19 Q Were there any -- do you know if -- do you
20 remember if there were any instructions or anything
21 going on through the PA system?

22 A Nothing at that time. Absolutely nothing.
23 The only thing we heard basically was:

24 "The fire is contained. The fire is
25 contained and it soon will be extinguished. And do not

1 go on D-level and do not go on C-level."

2 And when Sue and I had made it to our cabin
3 earlier to get the life jacket and stuff, when we came
4 out into the smoke-filled hallway, that's when they
5 announced, "You cannot go on B-level." But, that was
6 already too late.

7 But, that's all we heard.

8 Q You didn't hear anything more really while
9 you were trying to find your way back?

10 A No, I didn't hear anything other than that.
11 But, I do remember him saying, "Do not go on B-level."
12 I heard that but I was in the process of trying to get
13 through the smoke to the aft of the ship at that time.

14 Q And that was --

15 A That's the only time I heard it.

16 Q And that was after you had already gone down
17 there?

18 A Yeah, after we had already gone down. It was
19 clear when we went down. And they had two young men at
20 that point where you got off the elevator and at the
21 foot of the stairs at the aft of the ship that said,
22 "Are we allowed to go down here to our cabin?"

23 "Fine, it's perfect down here."

24 Which it was. There was no smoke whatsoever
25 when we went down there. And in that time span maybe

1 from the elevator and the staircasing to the cabin was
2 probably two, three minutes. And another four or five
3 minutes in the cabin.

4 And then we came out. "Whoop", it was there.

5 Q How long do you think that you were in the
6 hallway once you left your cabin? Once you left the
7 cabin and first encountered the smoke until you got up
8 to the crew's section that was clear?

9 A Well, I heard Sue yell, "Carl. I got clear
10 air... or fresh air down here." I heard that.

11 And that was just before I went into the
12 wall. Because I thought, well, she found clear air so
13 I'll hustle. And I would have to say she was in the
14 smoke-filled hallway probably before she got to the air
15 because I estimated my time from when I heard her voice
16 -- it was off in quite a distance.

17 And knowing now that when she got to the
18 clear air, she was at that staircasing at the aft, that
19 probably I was in it fifteen to twenty minutes in the
20 hallway, in the smoke. Definitely fifteen.

21 I don't know if I could have made it twenty
22 or not but, yeah, definitely fifteen minutes.

23 Q Can you describe the injuries that you -- you
24 know, you described that you think you hit your head
25 twice ^{on} the wall.

1 A Yeah.

2 Q Is that pretty much the extent of injuries?

3 A Pretty much that I have knowledge of. I mean
4 they've taken -- took x-rays, that kind of thing. And
5 nobody said anything about -- I thought maybe I might
6 have had a slight concussion because I did raise two
7 nice knots. And I have a cut on the forehead.

8 And I thought, well, it's possible I have a
9 slightly concussion, but it didn't amount to anything.
10 But, that's the only injuries that I am aware of right
11 at the moment.

12 Q Physically, I mean, physically, that's the
13 only thing that I see, is the big cut on your head.

14 A Yeah.

15 Q And that was from hitting the wall?

16 A Yeah, and being disorientated at the time. I
17 backed up and took another run at it, bounced off the
18 wall again. Then I decided, well, I can't go that way.
19 So I tried a different direction.

20 THE INVESTIGATOR: Okay. I'm going to pause
21 it again.

22 (Record paused.)

23 THE INVESTIGATOR: Okay, we're going to
24 continue with the interview.

25 BY THE INVESTIGATOR:

1 Q Can you go ahead and start talking about once
2 you left that crew section?

3 A Left the crew section following, was in with
4 them when they were exiting the crew's dining hall.
5 Went outside to the exterior, which was where the pool
6 and spa was located at. And there was a bunch of
7 people out there that had been already out there
8 getting ready for their orientation on the glaciers and
9 things.

10 And I was looking for my wife, my sister and
11 my brother-in-law and was clearing my throat or trying
12 ^{to}~~to~~ get it cleared and my eyes, they were on fire.

13 And I did not get any assistance from any of
14 the crew members. And I did notice people outside with
15 some kind of a cover on that said "Traffic Control".
16 And they were smoking cigarettes and drinking coffee
17 and having a good time.

18 I didn't see any smoke because I really
19 wasn't looking for any. All I was looking for was my
20 wife, my sister and my brother-in-law.

21 And clearing my own thoughts up in my own
22 head and my orientation where I was at. And then my
23 wife spotted me just a few minutes before I spotted
24 her. And we got together and made sure everybody was
25 all right, hugging each other stuff.

1 And then we went to our orientation assigned
2 area for us to meet at in case of an emergency. And
3 when we got there, we checked in with the head steward.

4 And he informed us that Beverly and Bill
5 Winnie had checked in with him, so we knew they were
6 all right.

7 Q And that's your brother?

8 A Yes, my brother-in-law and my sister, Beverly
9 and Bill Winnie. And we seen them and they were fine.

10 And then we discussed what happened, where we
11 went, how we got separated from them. And then people
12 around me started telling me how much I stunk because
13 of the smoke that I had been in, and wondering why
14 there was no emergency evacuation orders issued over
15 the PA system instead of letting everybody just go
16 helter-skelter in all different directions.

17 Q ~~Let me~~ Clarify something in my own mind. Was
18 the glacier experience going on at the same time?

19 A Yes, it was.

20 Q So then --

21 A A Forester was talking over a PA system at
22 that particular time. From the time that we had
23 momentarily got into our breakfast, he had started a--
24 the captain introduced him over the PA system and his
25 name, and this and that.

1 He started talking and all of that was going
2 on while this other thing was going on, which was the
3 fire.

4 Q Were there any other individuals that got
5 caught in the smoke, to your knowledge?

6 A Oh, I'm sure -- no, not -- just my knowledge
7 was limited in that area because my main concern was my
8 wife, my brother-in-law and my sister. And, basically,
9 I guess my soul concern was the four of us. We were
10 fine and I really didn't care about anybody else.

11 And we were all right. All had life jackets
12 on and, fine, we were ready and willing to go wherever
13 they told us to.

14 And I talked to different other passengers
15 that talked to me and told me about how I smelled, and
16 this and that. But, they said the PA system
17 information was very inadequate and that they didn't
18 give out the things that they thought they should have.

19 And they couldn't find any help.

20 Q So there were some other people that were in
21 the same situation as you were?

22 A Yeah, but they weren't -- to my knowledge,
23 they weren't in like the hallway that I had been in,
24 exiting our cabin, which was B-deck.

25 Because it seemed like from what I've

1 understood is that D, C and B deck were the only decks
2 that were really involved in this mass amount of smoke.

3 So everybody that was up on main deck and
4 whatever were not involved in it. And the majority of
5 the people had already had all their coats and
6 everything -- cameras and binoculars -- to go outside
7 for this glacier watch.

8 And they, therefore, didn't have any reason
9 to go back to their cabins and be involved in the
10 smoke. So there was just a few of these that I
11 probably -- we thought about it later on and we said we
12 should have took the stuff with us, but that was only
13 because of what happened.

14 We wouldn't have thought that way if a fire
15 had never happened and the smoke never did. We would
16 have just thought, well, we went down after breakfast
17 because I didn't want to keep track and they didn't
18 want to keep track of everything while we were trying
19 to eat breakfast.

20 Q Right. Okay. So your brother-in-law and
21 sister also went down with you?

22 A Yeah, but they got down and back out before
23 the fire door closed. And he took the first exit
24 outside the cabin. So they got out really -- they got
25 out really quick and good.

1 Q Did they encounter smoke?

2 A Not to the capacity that I had taken it, or
3 Sue had taken it. They had smoke, yes, but my sister
4 was smart enough that they had soaked up a couple of
5 towels and ^{threw} through them over their face and they took
6 off because they thought we were going to be right
7 behind them.

8 Well, apparently, there was a one two-minute
9 lapse of timing there because the fire door closed and
10 the hallway filled with smoke. I guess if the fire
11 door would have stayed open, the hallway might have
12 stayed clear a little bit longer. I don't know.

13 But it sure is possible.

14 Q What is your sister's name again?

15 A Beverly Winnie, W-i-n-n-i-e, and Bill --
16 William.

17 Q Okay. Medical assistance, when did you
18 receive medical assistance and what did that consist
19 of?

20 A We were at the staging area, like I said,
21 right after we found out that everybody, the four of
22 us, were okay. And we were talking and the chest pains
23 I started to notice because I guess I was coming down
24 from ^{Cloud} ... 14.

25 And I told my brother-in-law, "I think I'd

1 better go see the infirmary."

2 So we took off to go to the infirmary. And
3 they stopped us and said nobody was allowed in that
4 area because it was too smoke-filled and we'd have to
5 wait.

6 So we went up to the main deck and there were
7 some lounges up there, couches and stuff. So I got up
8 there and I laid down and took off some clothing
9 because I was sweating profusely at the time.

10 I don't know if it was shock or what it was
11 but I was sweating profusely so I took off some
12 clothing and laid down on the couch.

13 And my brother-in-law went up and proceeded
14 to try to find some help, medical help, for me because
15 I was having such severe chest pains.

16 And, eventually, I don't know how long -- it
17 wasn't really that long. Maybe five or ten minutes, I
18 guess, time spent -- that a nurse come up with a
19 wheelchair and an oxygen tank. And got me. Asked a
20 couple of questions right then.

21 But then rushed me right back. But, we went
22 down to the infirmary. They let us in when she was
23 with me. And they must have got some of the smoke out
24 because there was just a little bit of smoke by the
25 time we got to the infirmary.

1 And then they hooked me up with i.v.'s and
2 glycerin tablets under my tongue, and stuff like that.

3 And overhearing their conversations over that
4 time that I was in there, which was about four or five
5 hours in the infirmary, that they were treating it as a
6 heart attack.

7 That the doctor that was like a roving doctor
8 was from New York City. He come in and talked with me
9 and he said basically, what it was is it was that I had
10 sucked in so much smoke that it had used up all the
11 oxygen in my lungs and was stopping the oxygen from
12 going to the heart.

13 Basically, that I was going to have a heart
14 attack and I would die. That's what the big thing was
15 and that's what they were treating. But, they were
16 calling it treating the heart attack.

17 But I've never had any symptoms of that
18 before.

19 Q Once you found each other and you came down,
20 I guess you described, how was it from that point?

21 A From when we were talking out on staging
22 station until the nurse was there?

23 Q Yeah.

24 A Probably, about fifteen minutes. About
25 fifteen or twenty minutes maybe, something like that.

1 But that's as close as I could tell you about the time-
2 lines. I didn't check watches or anything.

3 I couldn't really at the time anyway because
4 I lost my glasses. But I never checked with them about
5 the time thing. We just had told him that I was having
6 severe chest pains and we were going to try to get some
7 medical help.

8 Q When were you medivacked out?

9 A Let's see, I think I got in there around 10
10 or 10:30 into the infirmary. And they finally got
11 around to getting me a cart and stuff probably between
12 3 and 3:15 that afternoon.

13 So I was in there about five to five and a
14 half hours probably, give or take a few minutes.

15 Because they were doing everything, the
16 i.v.'s and the glycerin and all that stuff. And doing
17 some blood to see how much carbon monoxide was in my
18 blood system and that kind of thing.

19 And it was about five hours I spent in the
20 infirmary plus I could see people coming and going and
21 being treated for smoke inhalation.

22 But I understand that all the others were
23 fairly minute compared to what I had. But, Sue and I
24 did get into the thick of it. Really, we were in the
25 wrong place at the wrong time.

1 Q Before I go on to talk about the crew and
2 your actions, do you want -- is there anything else
3 that you can think of about the time, you know, from
4 the time that you went to the breakfast room to the
5 time you got to the infirmary that you want to add?

6 A No, probably not other than I don't think
7 that we or any of the other passengers got the
8 assistance and help and were informed of anything that
9 I recollect over the PA system.

10 And that the four of us were sitting at the
11 breakfast table and that really was -- it just seemed
12 like all they were considering the emergency of this
13 situation was like if there was a fire in a waste
14 basket. That's the way that they seemed like they were
15 treating it:

16 "Oh, it's under control." "It's contained."

17 And then they'd come back a few minutes
18 later, and then they would add another deck to it.
19 But, B-deck definitely was not added to that list over
20 the PA system until Sue and I had left the compartment.
21 Maybe, some other people. I don't know. I couldn't
22 see anyone.

23 It wasn't put off limits until we were out in
24 the smoke.

25 Q When you were in your room and when you were

1 on the floor going out to the hall, did you hear any
2 like fire alarms or --

3 A None.

4 Q -- any smoke alarms?

5 A None.

6 Q Excuse me?

7 A None.

8 Q Did you have smoke alarms in your --

9 A I recollect seeing smoke alarms in the
10 ceiling of the hallways. As far as the cabin goes, I
11 don't recall seeing any in the cabin itself.

12 And Sue suggested after this was all over
13 with we maybe should have just wet a towel and stayed
14 in the cabin.

15 But, where our cabin was situated at, if we
16 would have got -- the fire would have got up to that
17 point, there was no place for us to go.

18 We couldn't have went out the porthole into
19 the water. We couldn't have went anywhere. We would
20 have just sat there and burned if the fire would have
21 got that far.

22 But I chose to take on the smoke after I
23 opened the door and go to the aft of the ship because I
24 knew that's where an exit was.

25 And I knew about the other exit, but I didn't

1 know that that door was going to close on us. But, of
2 course, I didn't know the smoke was going to be there
3 either that fast and that heavy.

4 Q But, you didn't hear any smoke alarms go off?

5 A No, I did not. I didn't. The only thing we
6 ever heard basically was the dinging of the things at
7 breakfast, the seven, and then seven short ones and one
8 long one, and then he came on and said that there was a
9 fire in D-level in the crew's quarters and there was
10 nothing to be alarmed about. Fine.

11 Everybody kept eating and I saw people coming
12 in to the Ledo Room to eat, which was like a cafeteria
13 style type thing. And they were coming and leaving,
14 coming and leaving.

15 Nobody was concerned with it. And they sure
16 didn't seem concerned with it over the PA system
17 because they came back and said, "Well, it's a little
18 bit of heavy smoke and we want everybody to stay off of
19 D-level."

20 But there "was no cause for alarm."

21 I seen a girl in the hallway and asked her,
22 "Is there any reason that we should be worried? Should
23 we get our life jackets?

24 "No, none whatsoever. Everything's fine."
25

1 Q The next question that I'd like, or the next
2 phase I'd like to discuss is how would you describe the
3 crew's actions and reactions to this emergency, whether
4 or not -- how they assisted you or whether or not they
5 assisted you.

6 And you sort of talked about that. You have
7 talked about that. But, also, you know, you mentioned
8 earlier about possible language problems.

9 Can ^{you}~~yo~~ go into that a little bit further?

10 A Well, the language problem was that 90, or 95
11 or 99 percent of the crew are Indonesians. And they're
12 all very nice young guys. But, they don't talk very
13 much English. And most of their conversations between
14 each crew member is Indonesian, which is their native
15 tongue from what I understood.

16 And they don't converse very well in English.
17 And as far as the help goes or the orderly or the
18 knowledge of what they were supposed to do didn't show
19 me anything.

20 I was on a fire crew when I worked at General
21 Motors, and everybody had a specific job to do. All I
22 seen there was chaos. Everybody was worried. The crew
23 was getting their life jackets and heading out to the
24 outer levels.

25 And, naturally, with their knowledge of the

1 ship as they did, they knew exactly where to go and
2 what to do and how to get outside into the fresh air.

3 But, the majority of them, like the one that
4 i seen when I got -- let's say rescued, the help
5 downstairs and I seen them guys up there with face
6 packs on, airpacks, and they weren't doing anything.

7 And the four of them, the five of them,
8 they're standing all in a group, which I thought maybe
9 one of them should have been on each level, or two of
10 them on each level and going down and searching the
11 hauls and banging on the cabins to let anybody know:
12 Get the heck out of here, or we're going to take you
13 out because we can see because we've got the mask and
14 stuff on so we can breathe. And that kind of thing.

15 But, there was no assistance. And like I
16 mentioned before, the traffic control people with their
17 things on over their garments that said "Traffic
18 Control", they were outside smoking cigarettes and
19 drinking coffee and whatever.

20 And I didn't -- those two young men that I
21 run into in the smoke, at the aft, was the only bodies
22 I seen. There was nobody else around.

23 Q Okay. Is there anything else that you would
24 like to add from your personal experience from this?

25 A Well, I got airlifted off, out of ^{there} ~~their~~ into

1 Juneau to the hospital. And while I was in flight with
2 these firemen/paramedics, they informed me that they
3 have a school here in Juneau that they train crew^s of
4 cruise ships of fighting fires on board.

5 And Holland-America does not attend that
6 school. And from what I seen on the ship, somebody
7 needs to go to school.

8 Q Did you see the Coast Guard or any other
9 outside agencies at that --

10 A The only other agency --, I'm sorry. I butted
11 into you.

12 Q No, while you were on the ship.

13 A While I was on the ship, the only ones that I
14 had not seen at the time but when we were at breakfast,
15 the Foresters were on the PA system talking about the
16 glaciers.

17 And when they tendered me off, when they
18 found out they were going to take me off the ship and
19 they turned around and went back to the Ranger Station,
20 the Rangers got off on the tender with us and returned
21 to their Ranger Station.

22 That's the only visible people that I seen
23 other than the crew members.

24 Q You were medivacked by Coast Guard or through
25 a private~~r~~ agency?

1 A Fire department.

2 Q Fire department?

3 A The Fire Department medivac team. The Coast
4 Guard, I had seen them, didn't know if they -- I knew
5 in the back of my mind that the Coast Guard would be
6 there.

7 Q Right.

8 A But I didn't know when and to what extent
9 that they were going to be involved. All they told me
10 was that they -- in the infirmary when they were
11 working on me and they decided my condition that they
12 were going to get me off the ship and return me to a
13 hospital in Juneau.

14 And then I found out they were turning the
15 ship around to go back to the Ranger Station because
16 that's where the medivac chopper was at, and they would
17 airlift me from that point.

18 And that was a three-four hour cruise back to
19 that area before we reached the Ranger Station. And
20 they put a tender down, and they put me in a tender,
21 and my wife in the tender. And the Rangers got in the
22 tender and we went ashore.

23 Q Any other recommendations? You mentioned
24 about the Fire Fight School for Holland-America.

25 Any other recommendations that you think

1 would be beneficial for an incident like this in the
2 future?

3 A Yeah. Well, I imagine all the new ships have
4 it now. But, my wife and I were talking after I got
5 released from the hospital today that the regulations
6 and stuff and sprinkler systems in a ship. And that
7 this ship was allowed to operate without a sprinkler
8 system installed because it had been built at a
9 specific date.

10 And they were giving them until 2005 to get a
11 sprinkler system installed on this ship. This is May.
12 And as of the end of September, the particular ship
13 that we were on that caught fire was sold.

14 So it's going to go to somebody else. And
15 whether they're going to be able to operate their ship
16 from the time that they get it until 2005 before
17 they're required to put a sprinkler system on it I
18 think is wrong.

19 I think automatically that Holland-America
20 should have been told: Take the ship off the water for
21 a month. Get a sprinkler system installed because of
22 the passengers' safety.

23 And that if it changes hands, it
24 automatically, before it's put into service by the
25 people that purchase it, whatever it is, that the

1 safety requirements should be -- it should be made sure
2 that it's taken care of right then, instead of giving
3 so much time to take care of this stuff, because
4 there's a lot of safety involved here.

5 Q You mentioned also about smoke alarms in the
6 hall. Would that have made any difference as to --

7 A No.

8 Q -- your actions?

9 A No. Because if we would have been in the
10 cabin before, the only thing that would have told us
11 anything was the PA system that had the ding-dings
12 going on. But, we were up eating breakfast and it
13 didn't make any difference to us up there because we
14 were already out of our cabins.

15 And if we'd been in our cabins, there was no
16 smoke down there anyway for the alarms to go off.

17 But, if there would have been a sprinkler
18 system in there, I wouldn't have had the smoke
19 inhalation that I had -- and my wife either.

20 The sprinklers would have come on...

21 (Record paused.)

22 THE INVESTIGATOR: This is the second side.
23 We're continuing on with the conversation about the
24 recommendations. And Carl has just finished talking
25 about -- and he may still want to talk about

1 sprinklers.

2 If there is something else other than
3 sprinklers that you want to talk about, please feel
4 free to do so.

5 MR. BURNELL: Just that I think that the
6 schooling should be more for crew members. And a
7 specific part of the crew should be expertly trained in
8 fighting fires aboard ships.

9 And I definitely believe that, regardless of
10 how old the ship is, if it's hauling passengers on
11 cruises, and such and such, that a sprinkler system
12 should be installed immediately.

13 And I really don't have too much else to say.
14 In fact, nothing else to say in regards to this. And
15 it's the end of my interview.

16 THE INVESTIGATOR: Okay. Thank you, Carl,
17 and it's about ten after 5 local.

18 (Whereupon, the taped interview was
19 concluded.)

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In the Matter of: LIVE TAPE INTERVIEWS

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Official Reporter

Dated: 6-2-00